

Testimony of Tom Swan

Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG)

**In Support of H.B. No. 5126 AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO
ELECT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE**

February 24, 2014

Good Afternoon Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and other members of the GAE Committee, my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG). On behalf of CCAG's over 20,000 member families I want to thank you for raising H.B. No. 5126 AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES BY NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE and urge its passage.

CCAG supports the National Popular Vote compact because it is the best way to ensure that the basic principle of one person one vote is respected. Throughout the history of the United States reforms have been enacted to help us better live up to democratic ideals on which we were founded. These have included winning the right to vote for women, the Voting Rights Act, and granting 18 year olds the right to vote to name a few. The NPV compact will ensure that all votes will count the same when choosing a president regardless of where we live.

NPV is gaining steam, with Rhode Island joining the compact last year and New York likely to this year. We believe we need to act because the Constitution state should lead in protecting the integrity of our votes, but also of votes throughout the country.

Connecticut has our own history of advancing changes that strengthen the idea of one person one, one vote. Recent examples include enactment of a direct primary system and the passage of our landmark Citizens Election Program. There are also parochial reasons that Connecticut should support electing a president by popular vote. Currently, we serve as a national ATM for presidential candidates with virtually every penny being spent on a shrinking number of swing states. In 2008, McCain and Obama raised over \$ 16 million dollars in CT, while spending nothing on advertising in CT. Even worse, is there was not any real investment in building the capacity of local parties when compared to other states. This spending results in jobs and in greater voter participation rates. The problem of CT being considered just a national ATM is bad for our economy and is bad for our democracy.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to pass this vital piece of legislation.